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National Detector
Dog Manual

Procedures

Utilizing Detector Dogs

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Implementation Process

Refer to **Table 2-7-1** for a quick reference to the main steps in implementing a new detector dog team and determining who is responsible for taking the steps.

TABLE 2-7-1: Implementation Process for a New Detector Dog Team

Steps of the implementation process:	Person(s) responsible for implementing the step:
1. Conduct feasibility study and on-site assessment	Port Director and the RCPC
2. Determine staffing need based on results of feasibility study	Regional Director with input from the RCPC
3. Initiate request to OPM to announce vacancy	Port Director
4. Forward a list of eligible applicants for interview	APHIS Business Services
5. Interview applicants	Port Director with input from the RCPC
6. Select a detector dog officer	Port Director with input from the RCPC
7. Request training	Port Director through the RCPC 2 months in advance
8. Test and procure detector dogs	National Canine Instructor, RCPC, or designee
9. Orient Canine Officer at work location. Included in this orientation is Canine Officers completing port and PPQ 436 officer requirements before attending training.	Port Director, supervisor
10. Conduct protocol training of detector dogs at NDDTC (5 weeks)	National Canine Instructor
11. Conduct BCOT at NDDTC (10 weeks)	National Canine Instructor
12. Conduct installation assessment at work location (2–6 weeks after BCOT)	RCPC, coordinated with Port Director
13. Conduct follow up contact (6 months after BCOT)	RCPC (consulting with National Canine Instructor)
14. Conduct validation testing, annually or as necessary	RCPC
15. Prepare statistical reports monthly or more frequently as required by the program	Canine Officer, Port Director, RCPC

Establishing Work Location Operating Procedures

All parties involved including Port Directors, supervisors, Canine Officers, and RCPCs should establish the operating procedures for a detector dog team. Procedures are designed for individual work location situations. The following topics should be considered when establishing the work location operating procedures.

Flight Selection

In order to select flights that will best utilize the detector dog and enhance pest exclusions, the RCPC, the Canine Officer, and the supervisor must work together. Work with the RCPC to establish a work schedule for detector dog teams that will take advantage of international traffic (flights, mail, cargo) that best uses detector dogs, based on the results of feasibility studies, port records such as PPQ 212s, WADS, AQI monitoring data, pest risk, and country risk (high, medium, or low), and other port activities. With Canine Officers determine targeted flights within this time frame.

Selected flights should be continuously reviewed by the Canine Officer and evaluated by the RCPC. Environmental impacts, including growing seasons, traveling cycles, and origin of the carrier, can change the success rate of a detector dog team on a particular flight. The Canine Officer is responsible for continually evaluating risk by working detector dogs on a variety of flights.

The Canine Officer provides assistance in defining the flights on which the detector dog team would be more effective in finding contraband. Additional assistance can be provided by the RCPC.

Tours of Duty

Schedule a detector dog team so that it is present when most needed. All scheduled tours of duty should be considered in determining the most effective use of assigned detector dog teams. Detector dog team tours do not have to coincide with existing tours of duty. To maintain its health and welfare, the detector dog must have a scheduled day off each week.

The Canine Officer should be allotted sufficient time to return the detector dog to the primary residence (boarding kennel) before any 436 officer overtime is undertaken as a PPQ 436 officer. If this is not possible, certain precautions must be taken to ensure that the health and safety of the dog are not compromised, the AWA standards are met, and the maximum amount of time a dog can be housed in a secondary residence is not exceeded. (See [*Housing in a Secondary Residence*](#)).

Proficiency Training

Proficiency training is an extension of initial training. During proficiency training, the canine officer uses many of the same procedures used during initial training, yet their objectives may differ. The difference is usually in the complexity of the problem in correcting deficiencies versus the dog learning something new. You cannot rule out the latter.

Proficiency training must be conducted on a continuous basis. The Canine Officer establishes a schedule (along with local managers) for conducting training based on the needs of his or her particular dog. Some dogs will require more training than others.

The best gauge of the amount of training to conduct is the dog's efficiency. If the dog has no deficiencies and is making the normal amount of actual finds, the amount of proficiency training needed can be limited to increasing the dog's sensitivity. If the reverse is true, the canine officer should consider additional training time. Four hours per week is sufficient for the average dog, though it should be kept in mind that additional time is needed to set up the required training problem.

Housing in a Secondary Residence



A detector dog must not be housed longer than 12 consecutive hours in its secondary residence (crate or wire kennel), unless it is being shipped in a portable kennel. Refer to [Appendix E](#) for guidelines on how to ship detector dogs. Refer to the [Glossary](#) for the definition of a secondary residence.

Utilizing Down Time

Tours of duty of Canine Officers should be scheduled so there is minimal down time. During this down time, other canine-related duties should be performed, such as preparing required monthly and training reports, grooming, exercising, training, and other responsibilities directly related to detector dog activities.

If no detector dog duties are being performed, the Canine Officer should then perform PPQ 436 officer duties, such as secondary inspection, pest identification, and record keeping.



When Canine Officers are performing other duties, the detector dog must be confined in its secondary residence, not tied to a stationary object. Canine Officers cannot allow detector dogs to do any of the following:

- ◆ Roam around the office or common areas
- ◆ Mingle with nondetector dogs
- ◆ Move about an unsecured area off a leash

Exercise and Biological Breaks

Following are health guidelines to consider while detector dogs are working and being transported. These guidelines comply with the requirements of the Animal Welfare Act (AWA).

Exercise

For the health and welfare of the detector dog, it should be exercised.



Exercising a detector dog off leash with other dogs can increase the risk of disease and injury. Because of the physical demands of canine working activities, adverse health conditions may be created or aggravated by play exercises with other ag working dogs. Back injuries are of great concern. To prevent future back injuries, all dogs over the age of 5 or dogs that have suffered any back related injury must have medical clearance for play activities with other working dogs.

Biological Breaks

While a detector dog is housed in a secondary residence (crate or wire kennel), allow a biological break at least every 2 hours. Take the detector dog to an area where it can urinate and/or defecate. **Plan for at least a 15 minute biological break.** This time line is a guide. Some detector dogs may require more frequent biological breaks, based on their individual functions.

Home Stay

Canine Officers cannot take detector dogs home except in extraordinary circumstances (i.e., medical situation, dog on medication, recovery period after surgery). Approval to take a dog home must be granted by the RPM upon consultation with the RCPC and the Port Director.

Approach to Screening



Detector dogs should only be used by their assigned handlers, except in extraordinary cases with prior approval of the RCPC. Detector dogs can be used only in areas in which they have been trained, and large breed active response dogs cannot be used for passenger clearance in FIS areas.

Detector dog teams should be used to screen passengers in an area that allows maximum exposure to baggage (i.e., baggage carousel, exit points). At post offices, detector dogs should work where they have access to most packages being released from the FIS area. The screening approach should be left up to the discretion of the Canine Officer, in consultation with local port management.

The following are general steps Canine Officers take once a detector dog responds to passenger baggage:

1. Note the response on the passenger's declaration form. This step ensures that suspect baggage is directed to PPQ personnel and is identified as a detector dog response.
2. **Visually inspect hand-carried baggage.** It is necessary to verify the accuracy of responses and it is an integral part of the detector dog inspection process. This step may include safeguarding contraband, and it frequently leads to improved detector dog proficiency and passenger processing.



Detector dog teams with over one year of experience in the field must maintain a proficiency rating of at least 80%.

TDY Assignments, Developmental Assignments, and Extended Leave Policy

Canine Officers are allowed to be on rapid response teams and to participate in TDY assignments. They should not be denied a TDY assignment solely because they are Canine Officers.

The only restrictions about Canine Officers taking TDY assignments are that there will be none scheduled within:

- ◆ The first year after graduating from BCOT
- ◆ Within 6 months after attending replacement training

Canine Officers should contact their Port Director and RCPC when assigned to or requesting a TDY assignment, a developmental assignment, or an extended leave of absence.

The Port Director works with the RCPC to ensure the detector dog's proficiency remains consistent while the Canine Officer is away. Use [**Table 2-7-2**](#) to determine the action to take to ensure detector dog proficiency.

TABLE 2-7-2: Action to Take to Ensure Consistent Proficiency of a Detector Dog When a Canine Officer Is Away for Extended Periods

When a Canine Officer will be away for:	Then do the following:
30 days to 6 months	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Temporarily reassign the detector dog. The RCPC is responsible for reassigning the dog within the region.2. If 1. is impossible, the RCPC contacts the RPM, who in turn contacts the NDDPM for help reassigning the dog to another region or at NDDTC.3. The RCPC provides on-site support to facilitate a smooth transition back into a productive detector dog team when the Canine Officer returns.4. As a result of observations by the RCPC and Port Director, they can request technical support from NDDTC.5. Regional management may, at their discretion, discuss alternatives with the NDDTC staff.
More than 6 months	The RCPC notifies the RPM and the NDDPM to facilitate resource scheduling, including reassignment of the dog.

Courtesy of the Port

Detector dog teams are more likely to encounter diplomats when clearing a flight as opposed to regular PPQ 436 officers without the assistance of a detector dog.

As a Canine Officer, when diplomats are encountered, refer to the Airport and Maritime Operations Manual, Airport, Clearing Passengers/Crew for guidelines about courtesy of the port. If there is a positive response on a diplomatic bag, the Canine Officer should request the diplomat's permission to inspect the bag. Also, be aware of additional port policies for diplomats.

Guidelines Agreed to Between APHIS and Customs

The following guidelines are taken from an APHIS Detector Dog Agreement established with the U.S. Customs Service. Refer to these guidelines, along with port policy, when developing local guidelines for cooperatively working with detector dogs at a work location.

1. When a detector dog responds to handbaggage, Canine Officers will examine it on the spot. If something is found that requires a referral to secondary inspection, place an "A" on the passenger's declaration card. Canine Officers may remove small amounts of prohibited items at the baggage carousel or elsewhere on the floor.

- 2.** When a detector dog responds to pit baggage, the Canine Officer will place an “A” on the passenger’s declaration card and will refer the passenger to U.S. agricultural secondary inspection.
- 3.** Canine Officers will direct passengers to secondary inspection after a positive alert.
- 4.** U.S. Customs’ personnel will be given instructions by local APHIS managers on APHIS procedures.